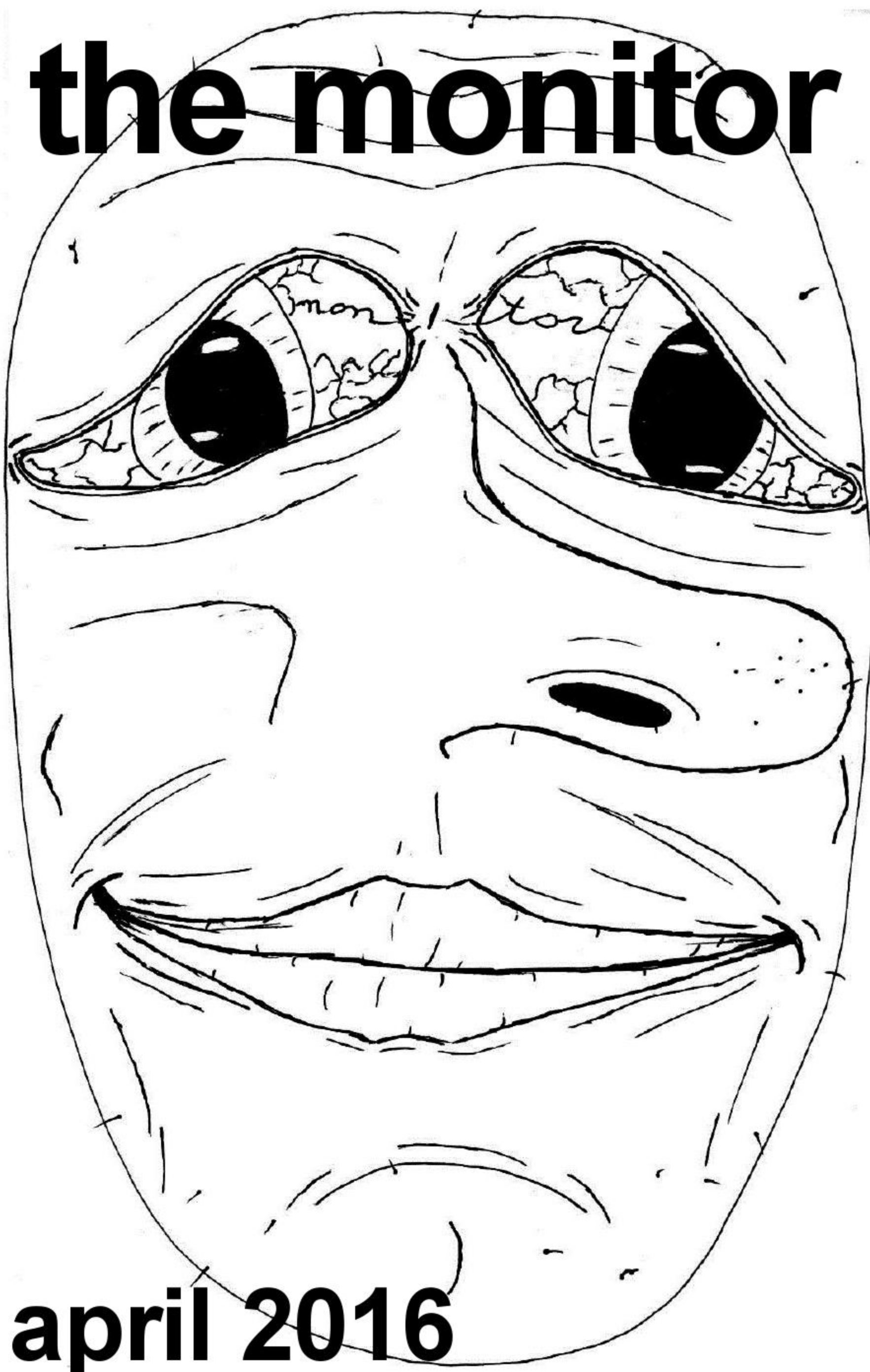


the monitor



april 2016

dear reader,

Wow! Way to go on picking up a copy of *the monitor*! You did a really good job and we're all really proud of you! The way you pick it up was really cool! We all think that! Please enjoy fingering through our pages and consuming our content! Let me run you through a couple of hypotheticals:

You're published in this issue: Wow! Good job! Please submit more in the future!

You're not published in this issue: Wow! Still good job! Feel free to submit your opinions or art or poetry or plays or manifestos or whatever to us at our email (trumanmonitor@ gmail.com)! We are always looking for more submissions and would love to feature you!

You're done reading and very confused: Haha nice! Feel free to share this issue with a friend! Or keep it protected for centuries only to resell it as a rare collector item or 2016 cultural artifact in the future! You literally have so many options.

We here at *the monitor* want you to have what you want right now without even having to ask for it, so we greatly encourage any feedback we can get about our publication or ourselves as people. If you'd like to roast us, please do so.

The arts are important and so is community and culture and you! We hope you enjoy reading this issue and look out for more of our issues in the future! Remember, *the monitor* is always watching. Waiting.

Love,

Your go-to source for a good time, *the monitor* staff

meet the staff,

“how's it going?”

blake buthod : “the sad rainbow is here to take my breath away”

jacob st. omer : “the struggle is real”

jillian danto : “i walked out of class to cry + call my mom”

jordan waddle : “The class war is upon us. It is violent but necessary.”

natalie welch : “ERROR 404

ollie ganim : “good !!! the best !!! wow !!!”

suzie nahach : “Well I'm pretty sure I'm still alive so it could be worse.”

alex wannerberg : “bad”

trista sullivan : “by the time you read this all my papers will be turned in so i guess what im trying to say is “aight homie hbu”

sebastian maldonado-valez: “everything was beautiful and nothing hurt”

will chaney : “Entropy must eventually cease”

submit

Words

We encourage submissions of original articles, essays, prose, and opinion. Due to space limitations, please limit pieces to 2,000 words. If you would like to publish something longer, please submit it and we'll try to accommodate your piece. For formatting reasons, please submit all text as an email attachment. Please include a short one or two sentence bio with your submission.

Poems

Let us know if you have any specific printing or formatting requests. For formatting reasons, please submit all text as an email attachment. Please include your name (real, pseudonym, or anonymous).

Visuals

We encourage submissions of original art, comics, and photography. Due to publication limitations, our art and photography is printed relatively small and in black-and-white (except in the online version). Keep this in mind when submitting your piece. If we like your piece enough, it may end up on the cover! Let us know if you don't want that.

Our contributors retain all rights to their works. Submissions may be published online. If you would like your work not to be published online or would like us to remove previously published material, send us an email.

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ads

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Rates

Quarter Page \$10

Half Page \$20

Full Page \$40

30% discount for student organizations!

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The Tooth Removal

by Xiao Ning

The clinic. She was here fifteen years before. She was ten, just broke her left arm on her way home from the farmer's market. She had one idea jumped into her mind when she felt the pain, oh, holy crap.

She was little at that time. Her maternal uncle carried her to the local clinic. Took X-ray, got bandaged, she made scratches on the floor with one hand. Her left arm was set free after two months; her grandpa took off all the bandages and wraps, cautiously. Now she still has an impression of that day: it's a Sunday afternoon, the sunlight was amber and the air smelt like an old book. Grandpa and she were at home; he cooked honeyed chicken wings for her. The TV played the weekend's classic song *I Love You More Than I Can Say*. "No matter what, I can move now", she thought delightfully.

Grandpa passed away five years ago; it still seems too soon to her, while her wisdom teeth come as late as some New Year party guests. Teeth started torturing her until she turned to twenty-five. Now she needs to worry more than eat and sleep: student loan, grades, aging parents' advice and endless teachers' assignments. Honestly, she is not very hard working, and she doesn't like some foreign teacher style. Okay, leave these alone, at this point her physical pain calls emergency and she tries her best to call the dentist, and lucky enough to take the place of an absent patient's appointment.

The surgery was on a cold, cloudy Thursday, and the nurse let her lay down

on the patient seat for a long time. Right in front of her was a TV, which was playing a show on how to make Christmas desserts. Bake the dough first and then smash thick chocolate cream all over the body. And frosting, sugar powder, etc. "Dear, I think I have to go to the dentist anyway if they give me one piece of that." It's an unpleasant job to wait for the dentist on a chair and in a small room, especially without wifi and any usage on her phone. Her new boyfriend was staying with his family. "Em, text that dork after the surgery and he might come and stay with me," she planned.

The dentist eventually showed up. After few ritual greetings, he started the unromantic work. The dentist put a giant needle into her jaw, and stirred up for a while. She felt a weird pain and started sweating physically. The dentist seemed to tear her mouth, yelled, "Open your mouth big, or I can't see your tooth. Open big, do you understand? Yeah, yeah, that's right. Keep it, Lisa, give me that plier..." She interrupted for a second, "Excuse me, have you pulled it out?" "Yes, I've taken it out; I'm sewing the wound now." "Oh, thank you doctor."

After a quarter minutes, her mouth was filled with a piece of bloody gauze. The nurse told her to keep it for half an hour; she spat it out after ten minutes because it didn't stop bleeding. Back to the apartment she lived, she walked to the mirror and opened her mouth, she saw a black hole next to her yellowish teeth, and a big knot stood out of that emptiness.

She tried to call her boyfriend, and then she realized her mouth was numb and she couldn't speak at all. Soon she felt really hungry. "I still have some pizza, and that should be it." It was a mistake; she chewed strenuously and she chewed her lower lip accidentally. The sense of penicillin took away all her desire on medicine. It was raining; the air was cold and wet, made one want to set fire to burn everything. "I started feeling the pain," she text her boyfriend.

"I'm sorry to hear that." He text back after two hours. No worries, tomorrow will be better.

Saturday morning, the wind blew off the clouds. Very sunny, few ladybugs flew around. Nice day, and her boyfriend texted her, saying that he would stop by her place a while. She took out the bed cover outside for the sunshine, and she felt like a happy lazy cat. She said to herself, "It's December, I'll have Christmas next week, and New Year, and another new semester. I wish my new year will be..." Last night she went to the clothes store, trying to buy her boyfriend a tie as the Christmas

gift. She is a Libra, and as common she has difficulties in making choices. "Man, I never tried to wear a tie before, this is hard."

She was about to talk her Christmas plan to him. She hasn't made her wishes before her boyfriend dumped her two hours later.

"We don't match each other. I think I'm not the one you want, and you are not the exact one I want," he said. It was all of sudden she felt something she treasured in her heart crashed into pieces. Then, her ex disappeared immediately. This is something afterwards: Ex got a gal in two months and had a good time with her.

Sixty minutes later, she sat outside of the porch, kept her head down and watched her wounded finger. She accidentally cut herself when she tried to wrap the gift last night.

"Fuck this damn world," she whispered to the wild cat, some water drops from her eyes, falling on the porch. That Saturday afternoon was absolutely beautiful, same as that amber-colored weekend, fifteen years ago.



Students for a Democratic Society Meetings:

MC210 Thursdays 8-9

Occupy the Quad!

April 29th

Divestment!

Sodexo!

***SDS is a radical, multi-issue student and youth organization
working to build power in our schools and communities.***

Join the struggle! @tsusds trumanstatesds@gmail.com

Cutthroat Competition

Part 1

by Korbin Keller

Whoosh. Thud.

I don't like my job

Shivt. Shivt.

But someone has to do it

Whoosh. Thud.

See a need, fill a need.

Shivt. Shivt.

It's just a job. No different from any other. I provide a service, in return I get paid.

Whoosh. Thud.

I'm no different from a butcher really, but you never hear anyone say "butcher" the way they say my title...

Shivt. Shivt.

Executioner...

Whoosh. Thud.

"Next!" cries the watch.

The last poor soul of the day approaches my block. An old man, quivering, shaking like a dog. Worse, actually; dogs fear death without understanding what it means, he knows full well what is waiting for him.

The axe, my axe.

The guardsmen force him to his knees. He is crying. What crime has sentenced you to meet me? Did you steal bread to feed starving children? Did you rape a woman and slit her throat? Did you question the sanctity of the church? I never know. I never listen to the charges leveled at my clients. Otherwise, I may be tempted to make sure it takes more than one swing, and that's a professional courtesy I always keep. One swing, one head. Doesn't matter to me if you are a prince or a pauper. Most of these people have lived a hard life, fighting for every crumb, and every speck of food since birth. Hard lives breed hard hearts which breed

hard people. It's about time they were afforded something easy, even if that's an easy death.

Shivt. Shivt.

I sharpen and clean my axe after every swing just to make sure.

Another professional courtesy I afford. Most of the other men in my profession force you to cough up extra for that. Most of the cliental are more than willing to, after all, they don't need money where they are going... but you never know if there is some widow, or child out there, who would be better served with the money. I remember my first execution; an old man a lot like this one actually. The soon-to-be-widow held out her palm, a single penny in it. She begged that I make it quick. I told her I would, and turned away. It only took one swing, just like it will here.

"-Amen."

The last rites have been administered. Now it's my turn.

My client turns his head on the block and looks at me. I don't correct him, his neck is still exposed and that's all I need. A lot of my clients decide to look at me, I don't know why. But it that's the reason I refuse to wear a hood, like so many other executioners do. If someone is going to lob your head off, you should at least have the right to look them in the eye.

I pick up my axe. He is still looking at me.

I raise my axe above my head. He is still looking at me. Most of my clients usually turn away by now.

In one quick downward motion I swing.

Whoosh. He doesn't even blink.

Thud. Now he does.

A head rolls into a basket. I won't describe the blood for you, in case you're queasy. About how it shoots out quick at first, and slowly drains onto the cobblestone below, pooling like a thick wine as the now lifeless corpse is thrown in a nearby cart, matched neatly with its head for burial.

Oops. I guess I described it for you. Sue me.

The Magistrate approaches me and hands me a coin purse.

"Five heads, that's five crowns. See you in another two weeks."

I'm paid well for the work I do. I am very good at my job. After all, I've never had had a client complain.

I walk down the street holding my bloodied axe, my spare slung around my back. People clear either side of the street, watching solemnly as I go by. Plague victims find more company than I do, but that's okay, I don't mind. Any one of these people are potential customers, I should remain professional. They will be afforded the same respect as all of my clients if that becomes the case. One swing, one head; guaranteed for free on their part, and at least they can gaze upon a human face before they die instead of a hood. I stand by my identity. Its dirty work, but someone has to do it.

I stop for a bite to eat at an Inn. One benefit of carrying around a bloodied axe; I'm always guaranteed a seat.

I arrive home to find a note on my door. A simple wax seal pressed onto the paper; the seal of the magistrate. It's a summons. I drop off my axes, being sure to clean the bloodied one, and make my way to the town hall.

I enter his office to find the magistrate and a well-dressed man standing off to the side. I have never seen him before but pay him no mind; probably just another merchant complaining about poor roads.

"You summoned me, your honor?" I ask.

"Yes, I brought you here to inform you that your services are no longer required."

What?

"What do you mean my services are no longer required?"

He clears his throat, "I mean that we no longer have need of an axe man."

"Are you saying that we have eliminated crime completely? No one need be ever executed again? Or has the King decided to repeal the death sentence?"

"Oh God no!" the magistrate flusters, "Then how would we deter crime?"

It's my fault for using sarcasm, it's still a new thing around here.

"Then why am I being dismissed?" I demand.

"You're being replaced." The well-dressed merchant says smartly.

For the first time I really notice him. Dark eyes, dark hair, pointed beard. Scrolls of paper at his side. My curiosity gets the better of me, "Who are you?"

"Your replacement."

Sadly I forget my air of professionalism, "This dainty prick is going to replace me as axe man? He couldn't lift a butter knife above his head, let alone—"

The man's sinister laughter cuts me off. "It's not I, who is replacing you, but rather what I *offer* that is."

"It's a new hangman's noose!" The magistrate interjects, "He calls it 'The Hangman' it really is something quite clever! You see—"

"We tried the noose," I point out, "it didn't work for us. Deforestation means no trees to hang people on for miles, and we can't just hang people on the statues, that would be repulsive. That's

why I was hired in the first place."

"Yes, yes, yes, but this is an *invention!* It's a wooden platform, with eight separate nooses! Noose? Neece? What's the plural for noose?"

"The plural is noose, your honor," the merchant informs him.

"Thank you! Well, anyway, there's 8 separate noose – no, that still doesn't sound right – eight separate ropes-for-hanging-people. All you have to do is stick the criminals head through the knot, tie it tight, pull a lever, and the platform beneath their feet drops away! An entire afternoon of executions could be done in such a short amount of time, and with just three installments of payments we will have it fully paid off within the season. What's better is that in the long term we will save money! It's really for the good of the taxpayer, you see. You're damn good at your job, no doubt about that, but a crown a head? We will break even on this by the end of the year! And it will definitely save time for sure! Very efficient, very quick. So sorry to let you go, but it is for the..."

This can't be. What am I to do? There's no "Executioner's Guild" no organization to fight this. Whatever the Magistrate says, goes. I'll lose my job. What's worse is that all of my would-be clients will have to suffer the indignity of being a spectacle, of having to hang there, necks broken, suffocating, waiting for death to take them. These people have hard lives, they deserve an easy death. I can't let this happen to them.

"I can do better."

The magistrate guffaws, "what?"

"I can do better than that invention. I can execute more people faster, and efficiently than that thing."

"Perhaps... but the money we could save..."

"That thing might only be good for twenty people before it breaks. You don't know how long it will last. My arms tire at the end of the day, sure, but you

know my skills. You know I am consistent. You could be blowing the budget on something that doesn't even work."

The magistrate looked nervous of that. I could see him beginning to reconsider.

But then the merchant opened his mouth.

"Might I so humbly suggest, a contest then?" he said, a smug grin on his face, "My contraption against his axe. We will see who the better is. Hmmm? It will be perfect. We can contact all the local towns and municipalities and villages and have them send their criminal element to us. We will line the city streets with people waiting to be executed. You'll be able to see firsthand, your grace, how effective my machine is, and the other towns will be able to see that even against the best executioner, my invention is better. If I win, I'm hired. If he wins, I leave. Whichever party executes their criminals first, wins. What do you say, your honor?"

The merchant doesn't even look at me, nor address me. He doesn't need to convince me to partake in this contest. He just needs to convince the government. And by the looks of it, he has.

"I think this is a splendid idea! We will have this contest one month from today while I plan this affair and contact the other towns! Oh this will be splendid! Man against machine, modernity versus antiquity, who will win?"

I will.

I may not have wanted this contest but it is decided for me. And for the sake of all my clients, I need to win. After all, what kind of professional would I be if I just left them hanging?

On the Bridgeton Landfill

by Will Cheney

"OU-2 has had a 'sub-surface smoldering event' occurring for several years. If the 'sub-surface smoldering event' reaches the radiological area, there is a potential for radioactive fallout to be released in the smoke plume and spread throughout the region... Capabilities and resources, which, if effectively deployed, would facilitate an emergency evacuation... Hospitals, nursing homes, schools, daycares and other facilities will require special response considerations if an evacuation is ordered..." This excerpt sounds like it came from a Duck and Cover pamphlet from the Cold War or a poorly written summary of the latest post-apocalyptic video game. Sadly, it is actually from the "West Lake Plan" published in 2014. The next sentence reads, "municipalities directly affected are Bridgeton, Hazelwood, Maryland Heights, the Village of Champ, and the city of St. Charles," all of which are in the St. Louis area.

Bridgeton's West Lake Landfill has recently received international attention for its increasingly dangerous contents, which include an underground fire and 9,000 tons of radioactive waste. Landfill waste commonly undergoes intense chemical reactions that can develop into an underground "fire," reaching 300+ degrees Fahrenheit. West Lake has had one of these fires since 2010. Tests have shown that the fire has been slowly creeping towards OU-2, the "Operational Unit" with radioactive material, and is currently burning 150 feet deep and has an area equivalent to 15 football fields. A private military contractor illegally dumped West Lake's radioactive material in OU-2 in 1973, as part of the Manhattan Project and the Cold War efforts to create nuclear weapons that would be pointed at Communists. Since

then, it has remained buried near a heavily populated area. Homes, businesses, Interstate 70, Pattonville High School, and several public parks are all within 2 miles of West Lake. According to the report, contact between the fire and nuclear weapons waste would necessitate evacuation for tens if not hundreds of thousands of people in a very short period of time. Increased levels of radiation have already been detected in Bridgeton's public baseball park BMAC, where hundreds of residents visit every weekend.

Even without a full on nuclear smoke plume, West Lake poses major threats to the local community's health and safety. Residents who live close enough to the landfill can smell the fire's discharges virtually all of the time, except for when the wind is blowing strong enough in the right direction. If you drive by mile marker 234 on Interstate 70, you will probably be able to smell the fumes as well. Many dangerous chemicals are abundant in the fumes, including the known carcinogen benzene, and people have even reported feeling dizzy and sick from breathing in the air. Pattonville High School has had to deal with the stench since at least 2011. Students who participate in track, soccer, football, tennis, cross country, and other sports are forced to breath in the toxic air while they try to push themselves to their physical limits. On bad days the stench penetrates the school's walls and invades classrooms. Additionally, a December 2014 report showed "unhealthy" levels of radiation in the groundwater, which affects local farms and wildlife. West Lake landfill also releases a toxic liquid called "leachate," which is gathered, trucked, and piped

through Bridgeton to nearby treatment centers.

It is nearly undisputable that the landfill poses a major threat to the health of Bridgeton's citizens, and for St. Louis County if the fire reaches the radioactive materials. There's more information available about the extent of West Lake's effects, but I would like to focus on why this issue exists in an advanced country like the United States. I will argue that systemic tendencies in capitalism caused this crisis, or at least made it much worse than it has to be.

First, it's important to point out that the nuclear waste at Westlake was created by a capitalist government for the purpose of waging war on what it saw as an ideological threat, communism in Western Europe and Asia. There is much to be said about an economic system that, when it sees a viable alternative, builds weapons of mass destruction as a solution. The government also allowed the Cotter Corporation, which was the private capitalist contractor that refined the uranium, to illegally dump its waste in Bridgeton in 1973. Even though this company has been held "financially liable" for decades, the nuclear waste remains a threat.

Second, the waste is currently owned by a capitalist enterprise, Republic Services. This corporation is not interested in safely handling waste or the health of local citizens and its employees; it is interested in making money, and bases all of its decisions on that fact alone. After the public slowly became aware of the issue, Republic grudgingly spent minimal amounts of money on superficial testing and a \$150 million plastic cap that was supposed to decrease the emissions released into the community. While this may sound like a lot of money, its profits in 2014 alone amounted to \$547.6 million. Other

measures that they took were not meant to actually solve the problem, but instead to give the impression that they cared and were "working on it." Their tests also looked for the wrong kinds of radiation (gamma versus alpha and beta) and chemicals (like benzene). It is difficult to say whether or not this was intentional, but detecting anything dangerous was certainly not in the company's interest. As of now, they are banking on the fire putting itself out, despite the fact that it has lasted longer than most other comparable landfill fires.

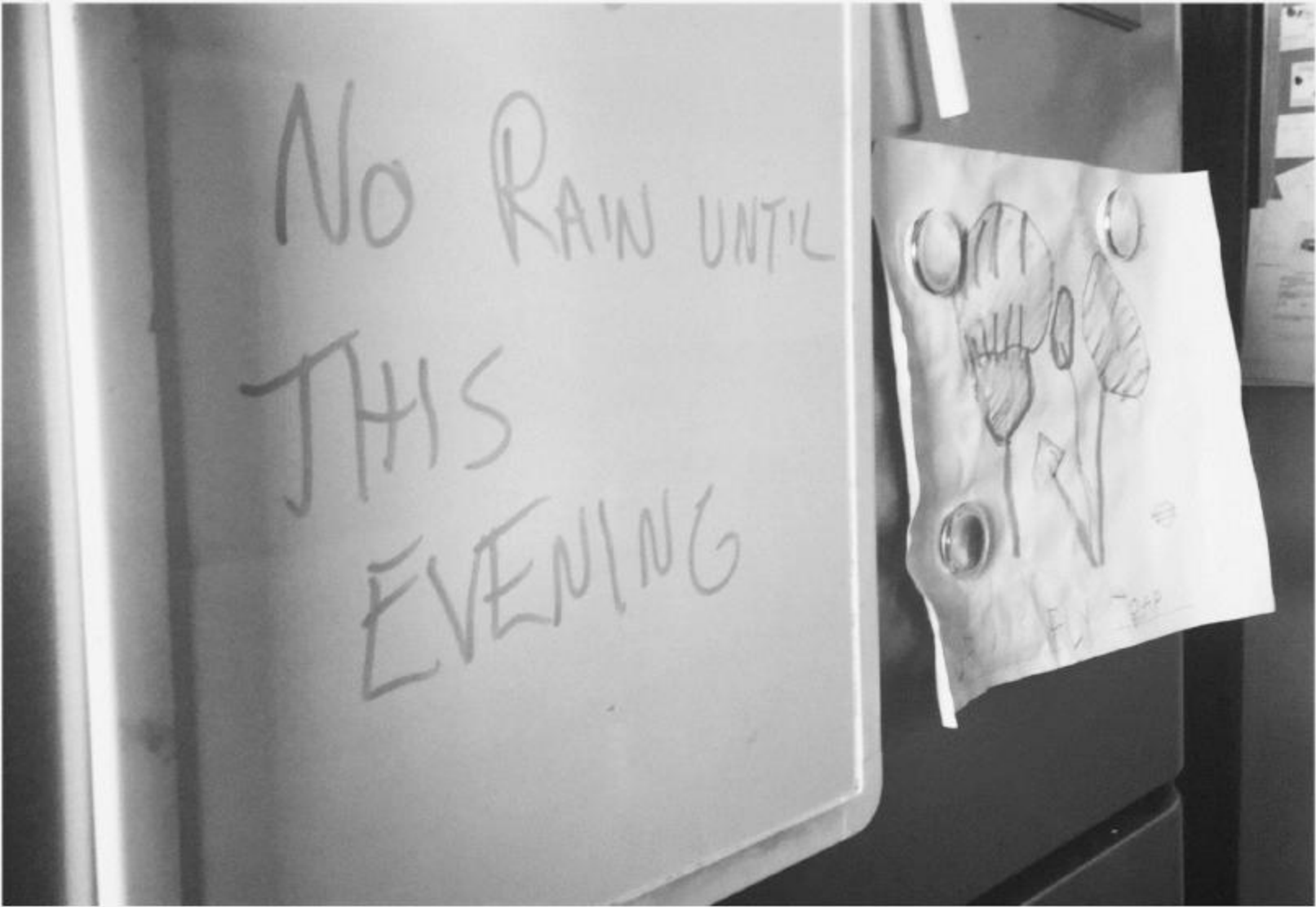
Third, the government agencies in charge of the landfill do not have adequate resources to effectively fix the problem. In 1990, West Lake was declared an EPA "Superfund site," which are places that require long term monitoring and clean up. When the EPA tests for and proves that an area poses an imminent threat to the environment and surrounding community, it is legally bound to take action. Unfortunately, the neoliberal policies of the last 30-40 years have drained the EPA's budget, and it does not currently have the resources to remove the waste. The result is that it deliberately avoids testing that may actually find a serious problem, which keeps the amount of information we have about the entire situation artificially low. Much of the information that is available has either been forced out of Republic and the EPA by pressure from local activists, or come from tests paid for by concerned citizens. About 2 years ago, activists pooled over \$10,000 to pay for a radiation test that was conducted by an associate of Washington University, which greatly contributed to their being taken seriously by the media. This organization, called Just Moms STL, has worked tirelessly to raise national awareness about the issue. They have hosted monthly update meetings, sent

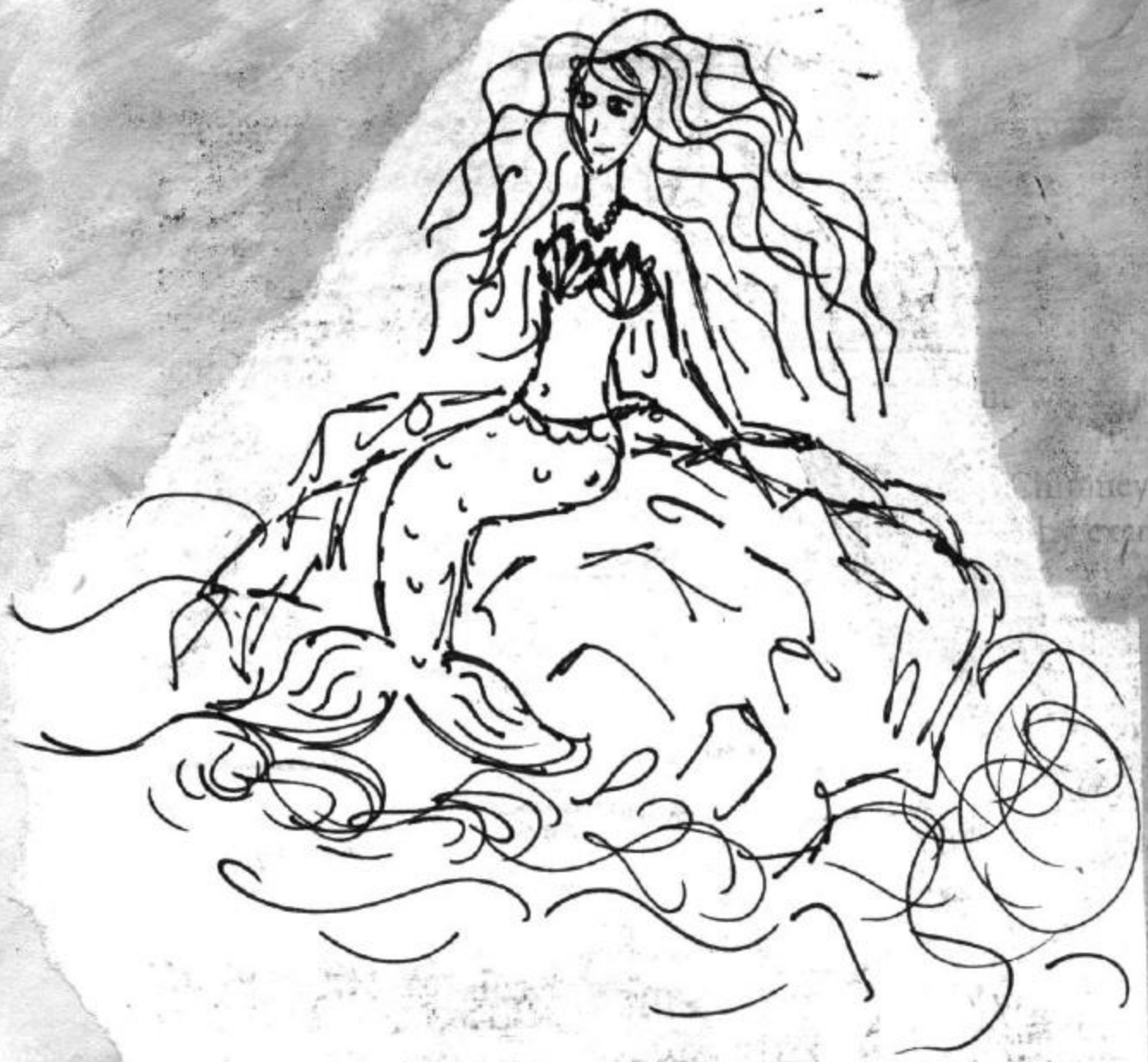
out information on the Internet, and even met with government officials in Washington D.C. However, they are apolitical.

The West Lake disaster is not the first of its kind. St. Louis had a similar tragedy along the Cold Water Creek region several decades ago, which has caused at least 750 cases of cancer. These catastrophes should be treated as a symptom of our sick capitalist system instead of blaming this or that organization or business. We could justifiably blame the government

for deciding to create nuclear weapons, or the Cotter and Republic services for trying to maximize profits, or the government agencies tasked with cleaning up the messes for failing to do their job. But without seeing that the entire system is undemocratic, dumping the costs of the landfill onto people who had no part in making it a problem, we risk recreating our problems in the future.

Will is an economics major from Bridgeton, MO.

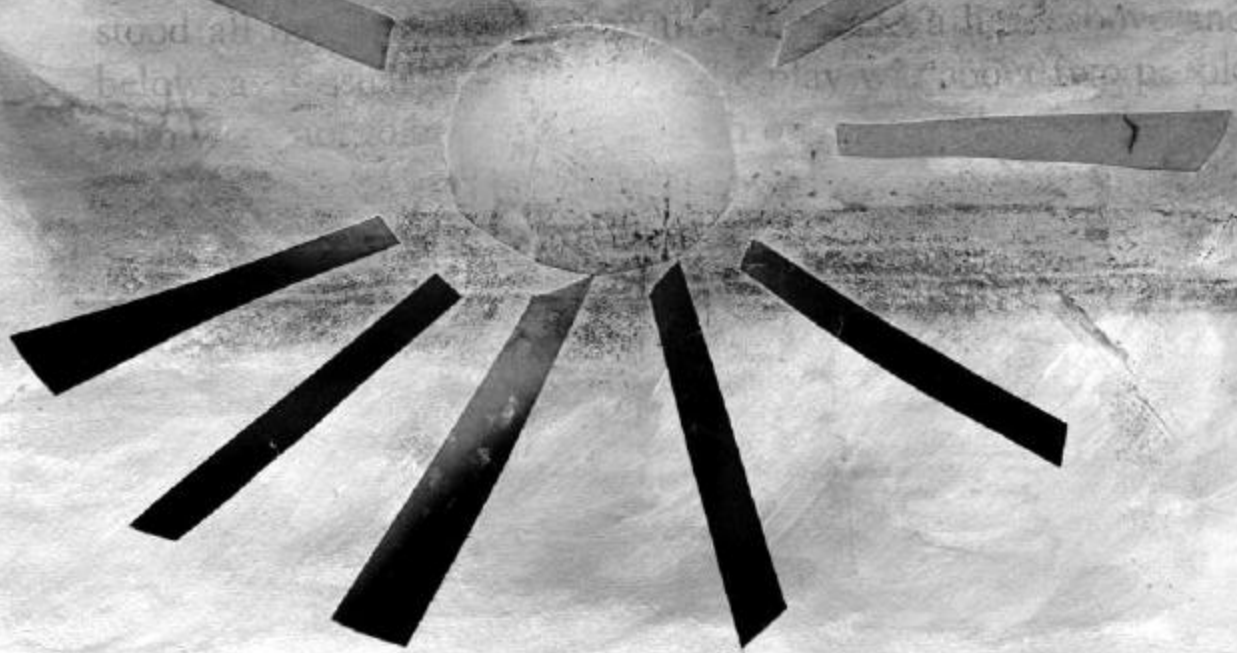




in the air, and called across to the old Chinaman.

"Now they're running away! Now they're running away!"

Then they were a little frightened, and jumped quickly into the drawer of the window seat. Here were three or four packs of cards which were not complete, and a little puppet show, which had been put up as well as could be done. There were also a few books, and some of the children's toys, and some of the old man's own things. They stood all round the window seat, and looked down at the children below, and saw that they were all safe.





Easter Egg by Priscilla Parisa and Jordan Waddle



by Dennis Baker



by Jacob St. Omer

BE MINDFUL
OF THE
SLEEPER

Agent Bubbles
AKA-Princess

Peach
she's hungry
for them

delicious Ape-Steaks!

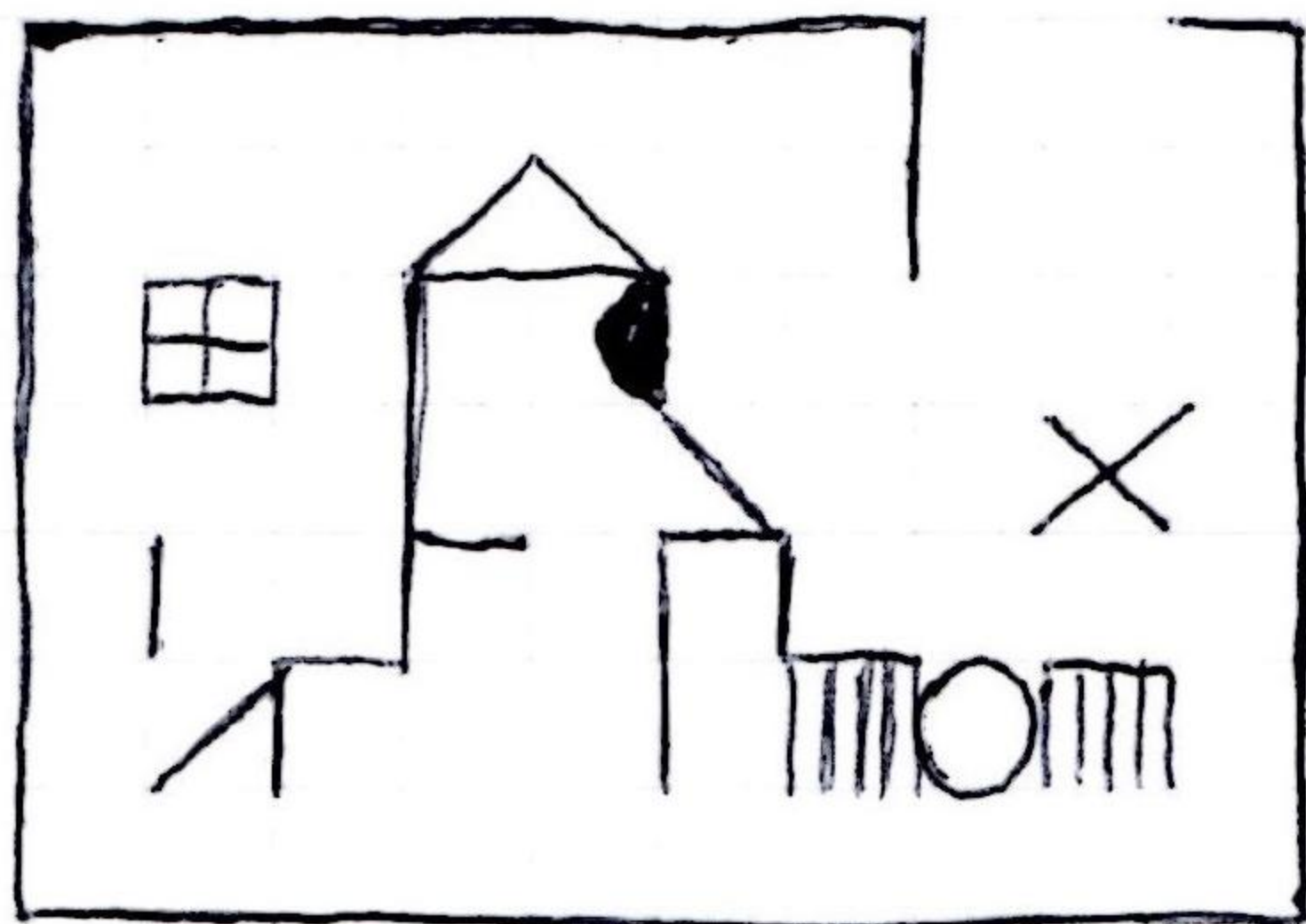
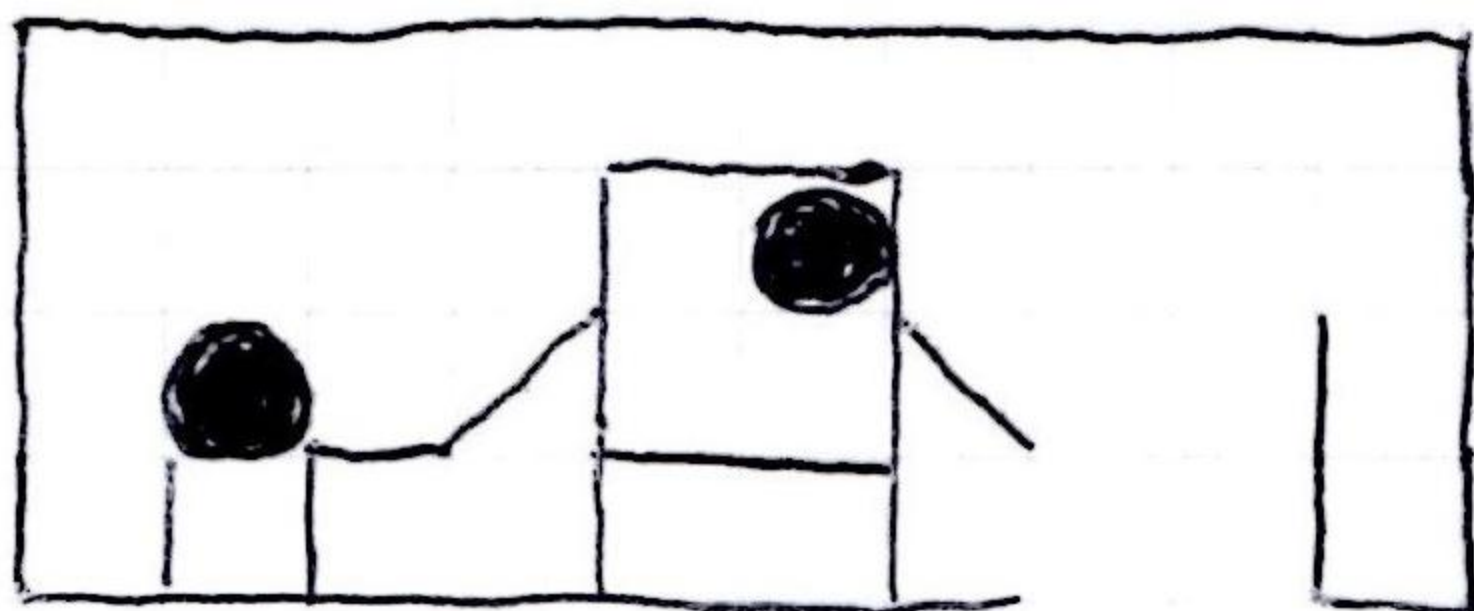
Ona Donky Kong

corners the ape-steak market

Give your meat a good ol rub

Found in a Magruder Hall Bathroom by Sean Simpson

THE LIFE AND DANGER OF PIXEL



by Blake Buthod

poetry.

Petition for My Parents to Add Vision to Our Insurance Plan

by Jordan Waddle

Is that person very
small,
Or just very far away?

Oh.
That is a fire hydrant.

Triple Threat

by Julia Miller

His
mind,
body,
&
soul:
the greatest
triple threat
she has ever seen

Growth

by Julia Miller

Grow through the dirt
to rise up to the sun,

You have to walk first
before you can run.

What the Hell

by Jordan Waddle

Stop Assuming People's Genders
Just By Looking At Them
Ask About Everyone's Pronouns
Everyone
Goddammit

Found in a Magruder Hall Bathroom

by Sean Simpson

Be MiNDFUL OF the SLEEPer

Agent Bubbles
A.K.A.- Princess
Peach
she's hungry
for them
delicious Ape-steaks!
once Donkey Kong
corners the ape-steak market
Give your meat a good ol rub

01101100 01101111 01110110 01100101

by Blake Buthod

01101001 00100000 01100001 01101101
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01111001 01101111 01110101 00100111
01110010 01100101 00100000 01101000
01100101 01110010 01100101

Velvet Clementines

by Sam Andrzejewski

If you can find the time,
take a look at the twilight this evening –
clouds appear draped in scarlet velvet,
thousands of clementines litter the sky

their scent overwhelming the staleness
of bricks encasing you like a tomb.
Concrete breeds a furor of blockage;
nothing can crack the caked cement

laid out like strips of gray glue
a gray and red chamber stinking of
rotten trees and sweaty hands
your laptop light is a torch of artificial

color, the phone a ball of pale fire—
it cannot break through to the outside.
But take a strong whiff and that wall
will come tumbling down like pillars

of sand –
even if for a second, there will be nothing
but the tangerine glow reflecting in your eyes—
there is amber forming in your head.

to the person who stole my hedgehog

by Sebastián Maldonado-Vélez

thank you
i am free
what are you

"escape" by ~olli sure~



747

by Sebastián

Maldonado-Vélez

hit me so i am here
so that when i say fuck
it's the truest thing in the
world well at least for me
monks can't touch something
maybe the airplane engine
but they can feel it
in the jungles while
they continue searching
for a good punch in
the face we are just
reflections of the safety
pamphlet because potato
bag children need air too
pump it hard and fast
through yellow masks
because the consciousness
is there hopefully
when angel names
start to look like
a grocery list
i go to wal-mart
and get them all

Button Making

by Sam Andrzejewski

Silver
no chrome
or silver trying to be chrome
never lining up to meet
at the corners of glass broken
light splits into fragments
each scooping up my eyes
like spoons in soup

I Will Not Name my Kid Beelzebub

by Sujash Purna

What is it? What it eats

The gnawing at flesh and heuristics

I have a pact with God that I will not sell my soul to the Devil

But here I am taking in bit by bit

Chromosomes inflating like dilating pupils

Red and black, coal and lava

Bricks and burns with scars defacing the innocence

The end of it

Like a movie that could have had a better ending

But there's no way going back

It is born with a tail with horns with arms feeble and gnawed

Rash all across its backs and it is swift-footed and sly

Born out of mother who is long dead, forgotten and buried

Amid millions of lives that had come, are coming and will come

An Experiment in Monitor Submissions

by Jason Yarber

I am submitting this poem at about 1:50 in the morning on the 24th.

Yes, nearly two entire hours

Past the deadline to submit

Will it still be accepted?

Or will this poem crumble under the crushing yolk

Of the tyranny of time?

Like the latecomers

To a particularly well attended

Bernie Sanders rally?

Like the Trouble Truman Student

Who sprints for Sodexo sustenance

And just barely misses the doors as they close

At 7:05 at night?*

Like the freshman that tried to get into that 300 level course

Because, you know, they're technically a sophomore by credit hours

But they slept through their alarm and woke up at like 9:00

Instead of 7:00?

There is, now, only the hope

Hope that this poem may see itself

As ink on a page

Sexy, sexy ink on a sexy sexy page

Instead of lost forever in an Inbox Purgatory

*The TTS never wanted to eat their shit hyper-capitalist sodium cakes anyway.

Conlanging Exploits: Tower of Babel in Nālēpeřu Līlēragi

by Lewie Dunham

The following is a translation of the story of the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1-9) into my constructed language *Nālēpeřu Līlēragi*, the language of an egalitarian society of single-gendered lizards living in a grand oasis city on a distant planet. While these lizards are not Christian, nor are they remotely aware of the existence of Christianity, the Tower of Babel is a traditional first text for conlangers to translate into their languages due to its relation to language. I first give the IPA symbols for characters in my transliteration system which do not match IPA, then give the text, then an English translation. My apologies if the translation is not quite accurate—I'm not a native speaker, after all.

<y> = [j], <ň> = [ɲ], <ř> = [ʀ], <ô> = [ɔ], <ĕ> = [ɪ], <ĭ> = [i], <ŷ> = [ʃ], <V>
= long vowel

*wo menatū břibřika ŷēbe lēragi twūdatrepwō. wo ākōprūkērigi ŷē, ŷē glīwabe Sināra
pyū kyōna prū twīkēitre, wo bwoře kyōna pyū twībītotre. twutwu mū twīmakotretwō,
“myumyudyā nīlwētofa, wābiwi nīlwētwařāpwō.” wo myumyudyā twūdatrepwō, wo
tībe kyātu drē twīgiditrepwō. wo twīwakotretwō, “ŷē lēbē wo ŷē tādobe myutu
nīlwēmyolēkēnwō. tādobe myutu līwarūtaga kēba prū nwīyabagyo. wo lūlēlūididigi
nīlwūdanwī, kyōna gwē kyōna prū ņe nīyabababi.” wo goda dwīkeritrē, wo lēbē wo
tādobe myutu twīmyolēkēkētre dwō břibřika dwāyītrēt wī. wo goda dwīwakotre,
“gīlwāyī, mena ŷē donūmu, twu ŷēbe lēragi twūdatrepwō. bwūře fakātwi lūparigi, wo
lētwudētugi ņe mēbī. gīlwēkeri, nīlwēyaba wo lūlēragi nīlwīdanwō; twutwu ņe
twīkřītatagyotwō.” wo goda kyōna gwē kyōna prū dwīdatretwō, wo lūlēbēmyolēkēgi
dētutrenwō. wo lēbē līlūi Bābila: nwī pyū goda lūlēragi dwīdatrenwō wo nwī gwē go-
da kyōna gwē kyōna prū dwīdatretwō.*

“And all the people had one language. And when going westward, they came a smooth land in Shinar, and in that land they stayed. They said to each other, “Let us make bricks, and let us cook them well.” And they had bricks, and put them together using soft earth. And they said to each other, “Let us build a city and a tower. The top of the tower will go the heavens, and we will make them know our name. We do not want to wander from land to land.” And God came, and He saw the people who had built the city and the tower. And God said, “See, they are all one people, they have one language. This is only their beginning, and it will not be possible to stop them. Come, let us go and split their language; they will not understand each other.” And God split them from land to land, and He stopped the building of the city. And the city was called Babel, because in it God split their languages and from it God split them from land to land.”

a virtual roller coaster ride

woo boy here we go

wow this is really nice. i've never done anything like this before. are you having a good time? let me know if you aren't and we can totally stop. that's totally ok. no biggie haha. i'm having such a good time tonight with you. the stars look really like beautiful tonight.

kinda like you haha lol. are you still having a good time? sorry i keep asking that. wow the line is really long haha. it's taking FOREVER to get to the ride haha. this popcorn is really good huh. i got mine with a little bit of extra butter when you were in the bathroom. i'm sorry i didn't put more butter on yours. i can do that now if you want. hold my place? no? you're good? ok cool just offering lol. have you ever done anything like this before? no? wow me neither haha. i already said that haha sorry. wow we're FINALLY there haha lol. do you want to sit on the left side or right side? you don't care? lol me neither just asking haha. these metal bars always make me feel like i'm being cut in half haha. i'm not being cut in half that was just a joke haha just a little bit of fun before our ride. sorry if saying you were like beautiful earlier was weird. i didn't mean for it to come off like that. wow the park is really beautiful from up here. if you get scared you could hold onto me lol. ok we're really picking up speed now wow haha wooooooooooooooooo this is a lot of

fun. do you think it's almost over now?
do you think that was it? wait fuck what
is that? are we going to GO OFF of
that????? what the fuck????? that is
huge wtf omg i don't want to do this
anymore ok can we get off now i'm not
having a good time anymore shit shit
shit shit shit we're so tall we're like at
the top of the park now shit i didn't
think it would actually be like this what
the fuck ohmygodohmygodohmygo-
dohmygodohmygodohmygodohmygod
ohmygODOHMYGODOHMYGODOH
MYGODOHMYGODSHITFUCKSHITS
HITSHITSHITFUCKSHITFUCKASHAS
DUATKAJDFKJDFASDHFUJKDFNHS
FBKASUHDANDYUSDNANADKBKSD
JFUCKFUCKFCUKFCUFCUKCUFCUF
KCUckfckufckfuckfuckfuckfuck fuck
fuck fuck fcuk ok wow shit fuck lol what
the wow lol ok i'm ok now lol sorry lol
wow ok sorry i didn't mean to like sorry
like i didn't mean to be weird like that
haha that was really intense. did you
have fun? did you have a good time? i
hope you did i did haha i promise i was
just joking earlier when i was saying all
of that stuff haha i didn't mean all of
that. thanks for taking me tonight i had
a really good time tonight with you
here. we should do more things like
this in the future maybe like we could
see a scary movie or something that
could be really fun. anyway i need to
go sit down for like 50 years lol thanks
again i lvoe you and i hope forever!!!!!!

The Feast

by Heather Brostrom

TW: rape

SETTING Room, empty other than a long table with a chair on either side. There is a large feast on the table.

*(Enter **A** and **B**, a couple, who sit in either chair. Slowly, normally, they begin to eat with utensils. Though they don't say anything, throughout the meal they exchange flirtatious glances and nearly timid giggles. Seductively, **B**, puts down their fork and licks food off their finger. **A** then goes back to near timid glances and giggles, but **B** uses one finger to smear food gracefully across their own lips before slowly licking it away with the tip of their tongue. **A** hungrily puts more food into their mouth. Seeing this, **B** drops all utensils and starts to do the same. Following suit, **A** drops their utensils, taking bigger handfuls of food with every bite. Both **A** and **B** let food run over their faces and they begin making animal like eating noises as they consume the feast. Simultaneously they stand and hunch a little closer to the table, to their feast. Wanting more, **B** puts a knee on the table, then the other and gradually pulls themselves on all fours onto the table. **A** stays where they are, but watches intently. As **B** eats, they begin crawling laboriously across the table, never missing a handful of food or a chance to make an animal-like noise. When **B** reaches the end of the table, only a few inches from **A**, they hold out a finger of food to **A**. **A** licks it off, and **B** grabs a handful of food. **A** shakes their head, and points to the food already in their mouth. **B** shakes their head as well, and shoves the food in anyway. **A** steps back, trying to get away, but falls back into their chair. **A** gasps as **B** pushes the food into **A**'s mouth. **A** grabs **B**'s wrist, but can't push **B** away. **B** pushes until **A** is flailing for breath. Then **B**, with a slight smile, gets off the table and brushes off their clothes. **B** exits the stage as **A** sits, choking on their last breaths of life, like a fish out of water.)*

Ransdell Attacks Trump machismo in Mexico itself, while Bowie/Rickman go mix legacy “Starmen” 2015-2016

by Larry Iles

At the termination of 2015, my ex-Illinois History student Dr. Diane Ransdell, English instructor extraordinaire at the over hot Tucson campus, broad-sided us all with her third current novel *Dizzy in Durango* (ISBN #978-1-61009-212-8). True scorcher against male machismo culture emerged before the awful GOP Trump rise of precisely such hate rampage in the 2016 presidential primaries. Or indeed beforehand the becoming by their deaths “Starmen” status of my late countryman David Bowie, the musician bisexual and the left-wing actor Alan Rickman.

In *Dizzy in Durango*, two of Ransdell’s most inimitable creations, Andy, a lonely detective, and an alto-ego Amazonian lady Rachel, from past novels reappear across the border, trying to locate a missing American stranger. In the course of the novel, Ransdell often autobiographically, as befits herself, a rare female Mariachi player, damns and damns features of machismo culture. In particular, men’s gross unwillingness, yes, to father children, but rarely to help nurture these children leaving them to discarded young ladies. And she castigates the small-town political and legal violence with which these very same men go on to protect their family wealth through, of course, their sons’ lineages, patriarchally.

However, she blisters her targets with peppery, sharp female humor. And she is obviously “très captivée” herself by the nurturing warmth of these extended Mexican families. Ransdell celebrates, unlike Trump, many aspects of Mexican life, such as free college education, passionate sex, and ordinary folks’ sheer survival despite the US clientele supplied drug cartels dizzyingly dominating the

town’s environment. The conclusion chapters will hit you, guaranteed, like a bombshell, worthy of anything her also visited Grecian Seas served up in her first epic novel *Ambrosian Nights*.

As I was reading, I could not help intrinsically linking this novel with the later 2016 deaths of David Bowie and Alan Rickman, both from cancer in two short lives. Somehow, the aging process which caught up with them so tragically came through also in *Dizzy in Durango*.

Ransdell’s characters, for instance, delight in the pranks of the Mexican kids, with a more than nostalgic wistfulness in forlorn hope that they as adults could go back to the intensity of sheer game plays with such mud splashing abandonment.

So, too, if more contrived, was the life of the late David Bowie, who my younger brother still overdoses upon, in his ability in *Starman* and so on, in incarnation, to capture revery and as “Iggy” embody sheer carnival-like sheer powerful bisexuality. He also was Shakespearean in not just originality of his words but in the rasping way he could string them together to verse/prose chant them. Despite resemblances to his fellow south Londoner Kent-born rival Mick Jagger and similar multimillionaire wealth, Bowie somehow remained far more authentically upper skilled working class in authenticity milieu.

Alan Rickman, however, was even more authentic. And whether in *Die Hard* or *Harry Potter* movies he was brilliantly a genuine leftwinger. In dizzying ways, Ransdell’s latest novels in lingering ways links together all Bowie and Rickman’s love of diversity in the wonderful mixed culture of Mexico.

The Side Effects

by E.E.

In high school Psychology class, we joke that Sigmund Freud was "Freud the Freak." Have you heard about that guy? He is obsessed with sex. Looking back, I think that Freud would fit right in with our modern society. A society that is equally obsessed with sex. We are so obsessed that we simply cannot get enough. Our society sexualizes everything possible. I can barely turn the corner of a street, let alone a page in a magazine, without being smacked in the face by the latest alluring ad featuring a scantily clad woman modelling with a bottle of perfume or some new revealing style of clothing.

Naturalized. The society that we live in has naturalized sex. Television stations are willing to air shows and commercials that contain sex appeal. Sex sells. Don't you know? The internet is covered in innuendos, how-to's, and all the latest advice on how to "Please your man in five steps!" "Using this product in combination with this exercise daily will help you have the most mind-blowing, orgasmic orgasm ever!" and the list goes on. Society condones all of the above. It encourages it. Access to porn is so easy that anyone, any child, with internet can watch it "for their own viewing pleasures."

Do you want to know what you will not find on those porn sites but can find on any bottle of medication with the potential for addiction? Side effects. Porn is just as addicting as the drugs you take not because you need them anymore, the pain is gone, but because they make you feel good. Watching porn, masturbating to porn, can be highly addicting. It is a drug. It affects the neurons in your brain and has the potential to become a physical addiction, like a drug. The drug it is. But I am not here to inform you on the ways that porn can mess with your own head, but rather, to talk to you about the side effects that can occur outside of the body.

Whether you are new to porn, an addict, the occasional user, or a past user, your actions are not without consequence. You probably figure that you aren't hurting anyone by watching. I mean it is available to the public, is it not? At one point or another, you have probably rationalized with yourself – you're paying for their career, they seem to be enjoying their job, you aren't actually touching them, so no harm, no foul, right? Wrong. That is the egotistical way of thinking. Stop thinking about yourself. Don't lie and say that you aren't just thinking about yourself. What do you think porn is? It is self-help – pleasing yourself. Stop being selfish for just a minute, alright?

Consider the side effects on those around you. Are you paying attention at work or are you just thinking about that new position you saw last night? Are you focusing in school and putting in your maximum effort or are you fantasizing about what you'll watch tonight? This is hurting the people around you by you not being focused and having your priorities straight. You are probably thinking right now, well you already told us it is addicting, what do you expect us to be thinking about? I know, it is an addiction, I am not negating that. What I am doing however, is asking that you look even closer around you now to the people that you are affecting.

Look at your wife, your girlfriend, your partner. Do you notice the side effects of your actions being reflected on them? No? Well I hate to break it to you, but chances are, if they are aware of what you are doing, or have done, in those private moments between you and your screen, then they are experiencing the side effects. How would I know this? I am experiencing those side effects. And unfortunately, not for the first time either.

You think you aren't doing any harm to anyone but really, you have just waged an unceasing war in the mind of your loved one. This war can fade sometimes, but in the silence, when your loved one is alone, it crops back up. It slowly but surely, sometimes even suddenly, creeps to the forefront of their mind. Don't believe me?

A few minutes ago, I was alone in the shower, minding my own business and singing whatever popped into my head next and then suddenly I was noticing how wide my thighs are. Then I started shaving. I wanted smooth legs because I knew that my significant other would be stopping by in the morning to cuddle. As I'm shaving, I notice myself nit-picking now. The war was unleashed with that very first thought and now I'm left feeling unwanted, ugly, undesirable. Why? My skin isn't perfect like that porn star you watched. I have angry red razor bumps from shaving. I have red ingrown hair bumps from the friction caused by moving around in leggings all day. My thighs are too big. What if my butt seems lumpy compared to the many you have viewed on a screen? My breasts are too small. Surely you admired the women with more voluptuous chests in your videos. I am not skinny. My stomach has permanent rolls. You claim you don't see it, but that is because I always try to hide it around you. I wear a baggie shirt or cross my arms in front of it or suck it in. I am embarrassed by it, even though I act like it is not there. I see my every imperfection when the war is happening, when the negative thoughts are winning.

With all of these thoughts flooding through my mind, how can I help but to start wondering if you'll be disappointed when you see my body? If you'll be disappointed when we have sex? I've brought this topic up in various ways but never letting on that porn was the reason for my worries and self-doubt. You say "No, don't be silly, I'll love you

regardless." I do not doubt your love for me, but I do doubt your words. Will you truly not be disappointed by my body? How can you really stop yourself from comparing me to those seemingly flawless women you ogle? It is time that we stop playing games and convincing ourselves that this is just the way that society is.

The truth of the matter is that porn creates unrealistic expectations around sex and around bodies. I will never live up to those women that you fantasize about and drool over. I will never seem as confident as they appear to be. I will never have a flawless body, a tight stomach, a perfectly round butt, or huge boobs. I will never be able to do all of the positions that they flex their bodies into. I will never be good enough. Because of porn.

Without porn, of both the written and digital variety, I might have felt confident. I might think that I'll be great at pleasing you and can live up to any expectations you might have. Without porn, you wouldn't have any standards to compare me to. Without porn, I would find myself more attractive and hope that you would too. Without porn, you would spend less time alone and more time with the ones you love. Without porn, you might find love buried in the burning passion you feel between you and your loved one.

But porn exists. I am not here to judge you. This was not meant to be a judgey, holier-than-thou type of article. This was meant to help you see that there are side effects to what you do when you are alone with your screen.

Warning: *Side effects may consist of, but are not limited to, a sense of worthlessness, self-doubt, a mental war that can lead to mental health issues, shredded confidence, feelings of fear and nervousness when intimate with a porn user due to overly high expectations on the latter's half...*

The Woman

by Austin Stuart

Our minivan came to a creeping halt as the gravel road came to a stop. Sprawled in front of the random clumps of grey gravel was a narrow entrance to a small cave. Where the colorful lights that danced on the mouth of the cave briefly, where all the light that was left from the day.

We were going to the gold mine. I had been there a few times before, and wanted to show them. Besides, I thought to myself, it would be the perfect place.

I glanced at Bertha in the rearview mirror, catching a glimpse of her voluptuous body, and long dirty blonde curls, as she was talking in whispered tones with Hannibal.

"Are y'all ready to go and see a gold mine?"

"Oh Stevey, if this is really full of gold, we'll be rich for the rest of our lives! Are you really sure you-"

"*Bertha!* If he said he needs help mining out this cave then why reject a friend in need? I swear, sometimes I don't know what is going through your mind," Hannibal cut in.

Why did he have to be so rude to Bertha? He's the only one who's really tagging along anyways. "Alright well if y'all are ready let's go ahead and go to the cave," I said swiftly.

Opening the side of my car, the door emitted a miniscule squeak from the rust stained joints of the minivan. I hurried over to the other side of the van, but of course Hannibal was already there helping Bertha, even giving her hand a bit of a squeeze when she finished getting out of the car.

I try not to get jealous of the way he touches her, I really do...it's just always reminded me of the fact that he managed to win her over. If he hadn't come along...so much would be different. Now

here I am playing the best friend for a couple, a third wheel. However it will make this job so much easier to do, I thought.

Silently taking the lead, I walked in front of both of them, simply trying to ignore the fact that they were strolling along behind me casually, meandering forward, while glancing at each other. As we started into the cave, darkness began to fully descend as the sun hid away beneath the hills.

"It's dark, cold, and I'm hungry. Can we start a fire?" Bertha whined. As she mentioned it I too felt hungry.

"Of course! Let me grab the wood out of the trunk!" Hannibal replied hastily, "Steve can you get the hotdogs out of the floor panel?"

"Yeah, that's fine." Who does Hannibal think he is? Ordering me around like he is the one who's in charge here. I'm the one who brought them all the way out here to see what I discovered. He was going to make my plan so much easier to follow.

As we strolled towards the minivan, I thought I should make sure that it was him. "So Hannibal what exactly are you going to do if we make some money off of the gold?"

"Well I plan on getting rid of a few... debts that I have gotten through business deals that went south." Hannibal said vaguely.

"I see" I knew this would be the perfect place to lure him to. Isolated and a deal to get out of his hole. Soon enough, I would take back what is mine.

I opened up the door and then searched for a little bit until I found the side compartment. Wiping the condensation off the panel, I pulled it open and found ice-packs. "Hannibal there isn't anything here."

"I guess Bertha just didn't pack them," Hannibal sighed, "Oh well...I guess that we can just wait to eat until after we get done here."

Walking back into the cave using a flashlight I grabbed from the van. I lit the way with the dim beam, a speck of light within the whole cave. We made our way back to the entrance of the cave Bertha was huddled. She looked somewhat impatient and shaking, waiting for the fire.

"Hannibal if you'll start the fire, I'll show Bertha where the gold is and start telling her the plans I have for the cave."

"Alright Stevey lets go see what you found." She said with very little emotion, as she grabbed a backpack full of pickaxes.

Leading the way, I started towards the narrow pathway deeper into the cave. As the stalactites and stalagmites start to creep in around us they glitter with water droplets and reflected light from my flashlight. As we walk I can hear my own stomach growl matching the yelps from Bertha's own belly.

"I guess that we should go get some food after this eh?"

"Stevey, I don't think we'll have time. Hannibal and I plan on going home and relaxing there after we get done making plans."

"Bertha...why did you choose him, over me?"

"Stevey, we have talked about this before...you can't keep pursuing me. I have Hannibal..we just never connected like that. Now don't spoil this by bringing this up in front of him, understand? We're just friends."

"Fine. Forget I said anything, let's keep going." Who does she think she is? She has been playing with my feelings for so long now...I was fine before she came along. If only she would change her mind...life could be different. Everything has gone downhill since she decided she was done with me, deciding I was just an option for her. It isn't really her fault, he tricked her.

Four years and three months ago, Hannibal stole Bertha from me. At the time Bertha and I had been seeing each other for a while, and I had the idea of marriage budding in my head. The problem, however, was that she had a boyfriend from the past, now a rising star in singing, named Hannibal. The man was tall, lean, with a mane of black hair, and piercing dark blue eyes. She had left him after his own personal issues took a toll on her, even though I had urged her to break up with him. After what seemed like months she had become mine, only for him to come back for her.

The night that he came back for Bertha was originally going to be perfect. I came over as the sunset, then cooked her the best dinner I can say I have ever eaten, everything from pasta to tacos. After the dinner I took her on a long walk underneath the blanket of night. It was quiet, save for the few crickets, when we sat down on an isolated bench near her house, staring up at the stars.

Taking her hands within mine, and feeling the warmth...I pulled my arm off slowly from around her soft shoulder. I whispered "Bertha...I need to ask you something." I croaked out in a small voice.

She responded in her silky voice, "Yes, Stevey?"

Before I could respond, a voice could be heard panting, and slowly getting closer. "Bertha...Bertha...Bertha!!" as a dark figure got closer a outline of Hannibal became more vivid. "Bertha...do you remember the promise we made?" he completely ignored me sitting right by her side, looking at him, and kept going. "I did it. I have a contract with a record label. We can make this happen...just like we used to talk about. I know that we had our issues in the past...but you said you were waiting for this. That this was the next step you wanted, and I'm finally ready." he then slowly bent down on one knee and held out a ring composed of

gold and glittering diamond. "Will...you be mine?" He said exasperated, calming the whole night.

Bertha was taken aback, and said shakily to me, "Stevey...can you give us a little bit?"

I really didn't have a reply at the time...but what would you really have to say? No? I just managed a nod, while she left with him.

You would have thought she would have returned. You know, being my girlfriend and all. I sat there all night, till the sun started to peek up over tree line; I remember distinctly, the glitter of my own ring as it sparkled, light refracted into several rays, just like the broken reality that could have been.

I didn't hear from her for a week. That turned into two weeks, then into three, until one night I got the awkward voicemail, saying we needed to talk soon. I knew what that meant. We had our talk, I tried cutting her off, I really did, but in the end I sucked it up and hung on to what I almost had with her.

We kept going down the long path, extending into the darkness. Eventually my light began reflecting back into my eyes. The path was blocked by the shimmering reflection of light back into our faces.

"Quite a bit of shiny stuff, eh?" I said trying to mask my grin that was starting to take shape.

"Steve, this is amazing! When you said there was some gold...I never imagined that it would be so much!" She squealed, running up to me and giving me an all encompassing bear hug.

"Hey, hey! I got the fire started!" Hannibal came running through the tunnel flashlight bouncing in hand. "Woah this cavern...you weren't kidding Steve. There is so much gold here." His mouth hanging slightly unhinged.

Both of them decided to take a closer look at the wall of gold that was peeking out sporadically beneath the wall of dirt and rocks. They grabbed their own

pickaxes from the bag and began hitting the wall a few times, judging the quality of the barrier.

I got my own pickaxes and balanced it within my hands. Now came the time for the unfortunate part of the night. I could do this. Kill the man who had taken Bertha from me. He had taken what has mine. My...happiness. My Bertha. I took the pickaxe within my shaking hands, lifted it high...then set it down. I could feel the hunger growing inside.

"Stevey, are you ok? You got really quiet! Come talk about the future with us!"

"Yea Steve, I really appreciate this...you are really saving me. This money...It will go far and help us stay afloat," he said pulling me in for a hug. As he embraced me I had to force myself not to stop thinking about all the tragedy that has happened since I had to deal with both of them; they were the sorrow in my life. Bertha, making me want her, but always rejecting me. Hannibal taking my woman...They deserved what they had coming.

As Hannibal released his grip from the hug, I quickly arced my pickaxe, flying straight into his temple. The impact caused almost an immediate crimson tide of blood to pour from his head. As he fell, his body was still twitching, crumpling up onto the ground.

Bertha let out a violent scream before choking out, "S-Stevey, what have you done!? Look at Hannibal!"

How could she be worried about Hannibal? We can be together now! That is all that mattered! "Bertha what are you talking about? Now that he is gone you and me can be together! Life can go back to the way it was!"

"Hannibal...." Bertha cried as she fell to her knees next to the bleeding body.

"Bertha? Don't you see that we can be together now?" I said with a little bit of doubt creeping into my voice.

"Stevey...what have you done?" She said in a small voice as she cradled

Hannibal's head.

"Stevey...just...go. Leave. Don't come back. I don't want to see you ever again."

No. She is just as bad as him. Leading me on. I'll show her. I picked up Hannibal's pickaxe and whirled it at Bertha's body. As quick as Hannibal had fallen to the floor, Bertha was smashed with the pickaxe, letting out a dull thud. She joined her lover on the floor following his own path with a river of blood gushing out of her chest where the pickaxe protruded from her body.

I just sat there and stared off for a bit, at the bodies that were once two of my friends. Then my stomach growled again reminding me that I was still starving. It was more intense though, it was gnawing at my belly.

The hunger made me focus, thinking

about what I had done. I had succeeded in what I had come here to accomplish. Hannibal will no longer ever bother me again, he could no longer steal away my happiness, I thought.

Bertha though...why had she sacrificed herself for him? Why would she do that after all we have been through together? It was for the better..if she wouldn't acknowledge me as her true lover anymore what was the point? I still have the mine though, I have enough gold here to make me rich, even without those two I will still find happiness, I pondered.

Even though they are gone...why do I feel a pit in my stomach? This pang is growing deeper and cuts even deeper. I don't think it was hunger at all. I killed my only two friends who were left. They deserved it though ... right? ... Right?

Mama

by Ashley Logan

I wish I could figure this out, hell, I wish I could figure life out, that would make it a lot easier to let go. The biggest problem right now is that I am riding a rollercoaster that the conductor won't stop to let me get off of. Maybe he forgot that he needs to stop the ride to let me off, maybe he doesn't care if I don't want to be on the ride anymore, maybe he thinks that the ride is good for me, maybe he thinks that if I ride long enough I will want to take over for him so that he can ride for a while. The problem is life isn't a carnival ride. More than one person should have a say in when it is over. I'm lying to myself if I try to say that I wish it would end, because the stopping scares me. I could puke and make a fool of myself and what then? He could say he told me so, that the ride was better for me after all. I don't want him to be right mom, but what do you do if he is yelling at you to get off but he refuses to stop the rollercoaster? Do you risk it? Do you try just because you're so sick of him telling you what to do, even when you refuse? He gets in your head and finds a way to control your life.

Well, it is official. As of yesterday, he is gone. I didn't even know he left mom. I asked him why he wouldn't say goodbye, what I did to earn that. He said that that he didn't know that he not only needed to give the princess an invitation to come say goodbye to him, but had to do it for her. I, of course, pointed out that I had no idea he was leaving to which he replied, "Do you know how bad it sucks to sit around waiting for a 'see ya' from one of the few people you care about only to have them wallowing around in so much self-pity that they don't even show up?"

Yes sir, I do.



+ other good
events !!!
wow !!!

the 'dome !!!

open aquadome meetings: sundays @ 1:30pm !!!
april 30 - FINALS FEVER RELIEVER: feat. Christopher
the Conquered / Jack Lion / Funky Onion Bunch !!!
\$5@830 !!!

@120 S MAIN ST - theaquadome@gmail.com

other good things o wow !!!

april 29 - Occupy the Quad: student body protest !!! @
the quad FREE
april 30 - SAB night @ the movies: FREE MOVIE + pop-
corn @ downtown cinema 8 courtesy of SAB !!! 5-9 !!!
may 6 - VisComm Capstone Exhibition: viscomm stu-
dents' art !!! senior capstones !!! 6PM @ OP art gallery !!!
may 6 - MIDDLE OF THE MAP FEST: feat ZHU, Vince
Staples, Gallant, n more !!! @ the Avrest Bank Theatre
@ 630 !!! \$35
may 30-june 3 - Youth Empowerment Camp: 5 day camp
learning how to fight oppression of LGBTQQAAl+ folx !!!
@ cuivre river state park !!! register today !!!
july 8, 15, 22, 29 - Art Hill Film Series: FREE films (top
gun, rocky, e.t., n forest gump !!!) @ art hill @ st louis

the end